

Ready to Read



An Early Literacy Newsletter

Renée Edwards, Early Literacy Services, Fairfax County Public Library

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Why Read Informational Books?



Research shows that some caregivers and teachers prefer reading narrative, or fictional stories, to young children. Many believe that children learn best from these types of books because they use vocabulary that, while complex, contain words most children hear in everyday conversations, and they focus on characters that try to solve problems before a story

ends. Narrative stories are also entertaining, and children can relate to the issues characters encounter (getting lost, missing their parents, going to school, feeling angry, etc.).

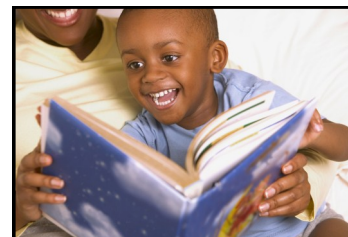
While narrative stories help children develop essential early literacy skills, informational books are important, too, and we need to read these types of books to children. Informational books communicate facts about the real world, and there are several benefits to reading them aloud:

They increase vocabulary and background knowledge. To become capable readers, children need strong vocabularies and a knowledge of the

world around them. Since informational books inform about the world, children learn about a variety of topics and discover new facts about subjects that may be unfamiliar.

They motivate children to read. When given a choice, many children prefer informational books. These books allow children to ask questions and find real answers about their world. In this way, informational books provide a way for children to understand what they see and experience in their environment. Reading aloud books that answer children's questions will motivate them to want to learn how to read.

They help children explain and summarize. When children have more vocabulary and background knowledge, they ask more questions; seek to find the answers to those questions; and can explain and summarize what they have learned. This results in children who understand what they are reading and this helps them become skilled readers.



How Should I Read Informational Books?

When we read informational books to children, there are several things we should do:

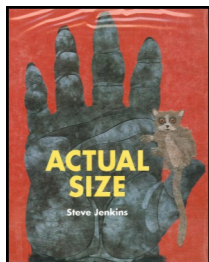
- 1) **Explain how we use informational books.** Point out the table of contents, glossaries and captions under pictures. Show how we use these text features.
- 2) **Reinforce learning with songs and fingerplays.** Engaging children with songs and

("How Should I Read Informational Books?" continued on page 2)

How the Library Can Help

Fairfax County Public Library has a wonderful selection of informational books.

Actual Size by Steve Jenkins
This book discusses and gives examples of the size and weight of various animals and parts of animals.

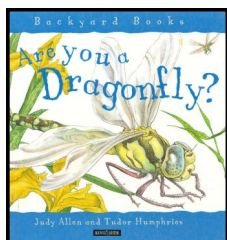


All Around the Seasons by Barney Saltzberg
Illustrations and rhymes celebrate what makes each season special, from baby chicks in the spring through a snowman in the winter.

Animal Babies in...Series by Jennifer Schofield
A simple introduction to baby and adult animals that live in different areas of the world.

Animal Babies in Grasslands
Animal Babies in Ponds and Rivers
Animal Babies in Polar Lands
Animal Babies in Rain Forest

Are You a...? Series by Judy Allen
These books introduce the life cycles of bugs.

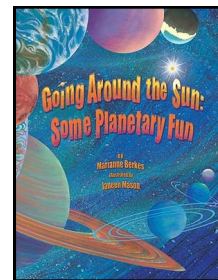


Are You a Bee?
Are You a Butterfly?
Are You a Dragonfly?
Are You a Ladybug?
Are You a Spider?
Are You a Snail?

Eats by Marthe Jocelyn
This book explores the relationship between animals and describes what they eat.

Everything Goes on Land by Brian Biggs
A young boy learns about land vehicles from bicycles to subways.

Going Around the Sun: Some Planetary Fun by Marianne Berkes
The earth is a part of a fascinating planetary family: eight planets and an odd bunch of other solar system bodies that spin, roll, tilt, blow and whirl around the sun.



Little Shark by Anne Rockwell
Through Little Shark's story, readers discover all kinds of fascinating shark facts.

Ten Little Caterpillars by Bill Martin, Jr.
Illustrations and rhyming text follow ten caterpillars.

The Senses (Series) by Rebecca Olien
These books describe how the ears, eyes, nose, tongue and skin work as sense organs.



Hearing
Seeing
Smelling
Tasting
Touching

("How Should I Read Informational Books?" continued from page 1)

fingerplays helps them remember key concepts and vocabulary.

- 3) **Use narrative and informational books together.** Using books that belong to each genre helps children understand the similarities and differences of each type of book.
- 4) **Include informational books in classroom libraries.** Children who have ready access to quality informational books in their classrooms have better attitudes about reading.